A Guide to Foster Care *in British Columbia*

Prepared by the Ministry of Human Resources and the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations

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Welcome to the foster care program!

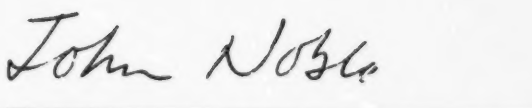
Whether you are a new or experienced foster parent, it is hoped you will find this guide to be a valuable manual to answer many of your questions.

The guide has been prepared by ministry staff and the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations, and is an active demonstration of our working partnership.

Foster parents and ministry staff share jointly in caring for the foster children of our province. The expectations of foster parents and social workers are outlined in detail in this guide, in order that each may understand and appreciate the essential contribution made by the other.

Foster parents and social workers constitute a partnership based on mutual concern for a child, or children. A successful partnership enhances the team effort when planning, making decisions and placing a foster child.

Ministry staff and the members of the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations thank you for the commitment you have made to care for the foster children of British Columbia.



Superintendent of Family and
Child Service,
Ministry of Human Resources

President,
B.C. Federation of Foster Parent
Associations

Foreword

The legislation relating to children in British Columbia reflects the government's philosophy about families and child care. The natural family is recognized as the best resource for a child, provided that his safety and well-being are not endangered.

When problems arise that threaten the integrity of the family, the ministry offers assistance to the family to carry out its obligations to the child. Should the family face difficulties, the ministry may either enter into short- or long-term voluntary agreements to provide substitute care, or the court may order that the child be brought into the care of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service. Both ministry staff and foster parents will assist the family to resume care of the child as soon as possible.

When a child is in the care of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service, either by voluntary agreement or by court order, the placement of choice, presuming the child does not have need for treatment, is the foster home. Every effort is made to locate a foster home in the child's own community and in a home of the child's own culture. Important features of substitute care are provision of positive models of adult functioning and a home-like family atmosphere.

When a child is made a permanent ward of the superintendent by the court, a permanent plan, ideally adoption, should be made for the child.

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SECTION 1

Mandate

NOTE: The Foster Care logo reflects the mandate to provide family care for someone else's child. The ministry's goal is to return children to their natural families whenever possible. Because foster care is seen as a ***temporary*** placement, the child in the logo has been depicted as being special. Foster families make a positive difference to a child and his natural family.

SECTION 1
Mandate

The Ministry of Human Resources has direction and delegated authority from the legislature in the form of acts for all of the services it delivers. Authorities are also found in regulations to acts and in ministry policies.

Acts or statutes define the objectives, responsibilities, capabilities and scope of all programs and services as well as providing the authority to fund these programs. ***Regulations*** consist of a set of rules to regulate the management of acts.

Policies clarify the way in which acts are to be interpreted, the objectives of the program, and describe the procedures which are to be followed.

In order to fully appreciate the roles which ministry staff and foster parents must fulfill in relation to children-in-care, it is important for all concerned to have an understanding of some of the provisions of the relevant acts and the implications of guardianship. Foster parents, unlike natural parents, do not have guardianship of the children they care for. Depending upon circumstances, the child's legal guardian is either the natural parent or the Superintendent of Family and Child Service.

Family and Child Service Act (F&CS Act)

The purpose of this act is to assist families in strengthening their parenting abilities and independent functioning through provision of a range of support services in order to protect children whose safety and well-being are at risk.

Under this act, the Superintendent of Family and Child Service has the authority to enter into voluntary custody agreements with families, or to apprehend and take a child who is in need of protection before the Family Court. The Court makes the decision as to whether the child is in need of protection and, based on its findings, orders that the child be returned home under supervision, be committed temporarily or permanently to the care and custody of the superintendent, or that the case be dismissed. Where a child is committed temporarily to the care and custody of the superintendent, another hearing date is set when the temporary order expires for the Court to make a further decision about whether the child shall remain in care for an additional temporary period, be returned home, or be committed permanently to the care of the superintendent.

The superintendent is required to place children who are in his care temporarily or permanently in an approved child care resource and his responsibility is to provide for the needs of these children.

The superintendent delegates many of his obligations under the *Family and Child Service Act* to designated social work staff. The word "superintendent" in this Guide can be taken to mean in most situations the social worker who has been delegated responsibility by the superintendent. Each staff person who has been "invested with delegated authority" receives a letter which sets out clearly the duties which have been delegated to him.

Guaranteed Available Income for Need Act (GAIN)

The purpose of this act is to provide financial assistance to those in need, and to provide certain social services to improve social functioning and encourage independence. Social services include, among other things, counselling, child care services, day care, homemaker and adoption services. The GAIN Act also has provision to maintain a child in the home of a relative.

The authority to approve payment for provision of support services under this act is usually delegated by the superintendent to the regional manager or district supervisor.

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* These acts can be obtained from the Queen's Printer or reviewed at your ministry district office.

***Family Relations Act* (FRA)**

One of the purposes of this act is to ensure that every child has a guardian. In the event that a child, following the death of his parents, has no new guardian appointed by a Will, the Superintendent of Family and Child Service under this act becomes the guardian of the person of the child, and the Public Trustee becomes guardian of the estate. The obligations of the superintendent toward children who are wards under this act are essentially the same as those obligations toward children under the *Family and Child Service Act* who are permanent wards.

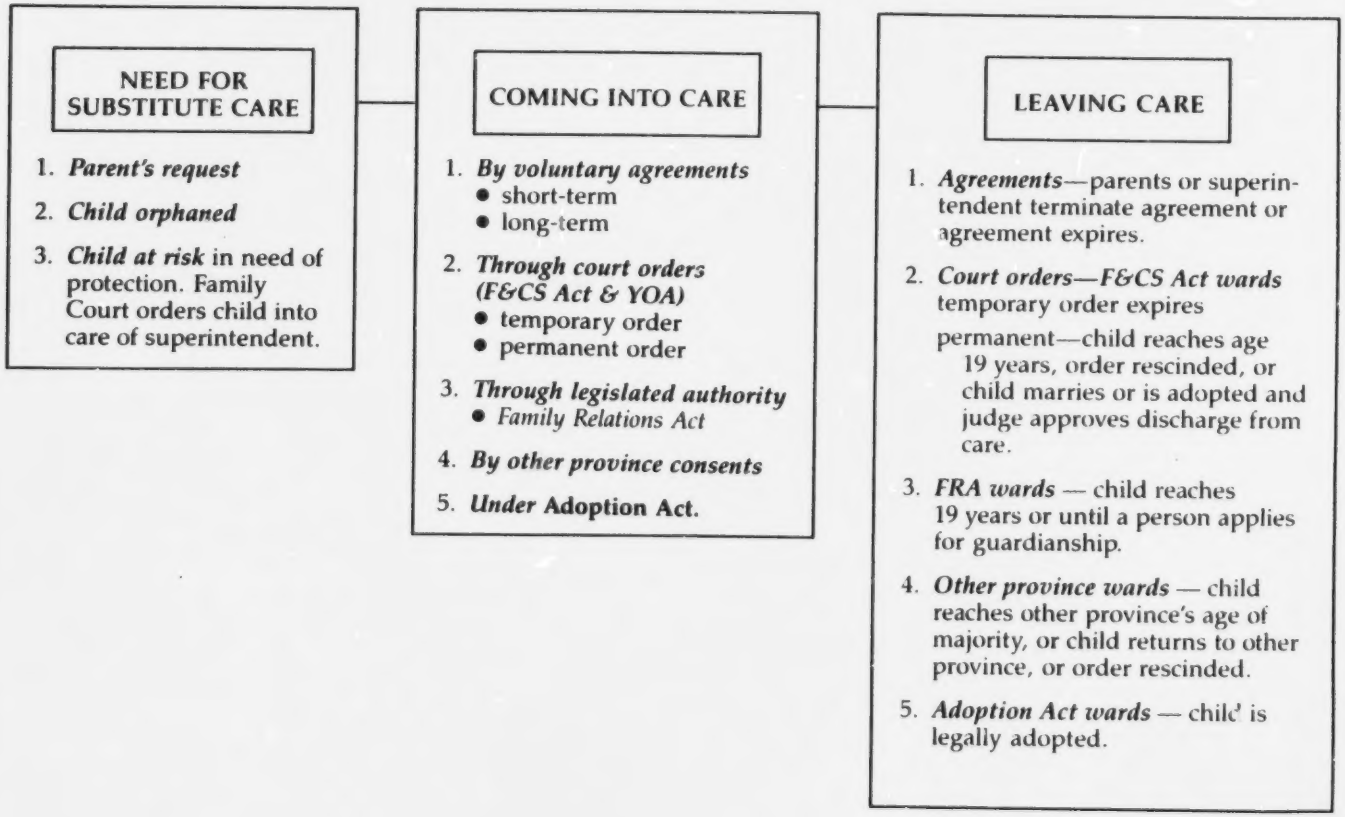
Adoption Act

The *Adoption Act* provides that children, placed for adoption by the ministry, become wards of the superintendent when adoption consents are signed by the natural parents. The wardship terminates when an adoption order is granted. This type of wardship does not apply if the child to be placed for adoption is already a permanent ward. Children who are *Adoption Act* wards are sometimes placed in foster homes for short periods prior to being placed for adoption.

Other Province Wards

Children in care who are in British Columbia from other provinces are transferred through a consent from the other province to the care of the superintendent. Guardianship in these situations is retained by the home province. Social workers for out-of-province wards are required to consult with the guardian province for all major decisions affecting the child.

CHILDREN COMING INTO CARE AND LEAVING HOME


NEED FOR SUBSTITUTE CARE
1. Parent's request
2. Child orphaned
3. Child at risk in need of protection. Family Court orders child into care of superintendent.
COMING INTO CARE
1. By voluntary agreements
• short-term
• long-term
2. Through court orders (F&CS Act & YOA)
• temporary order
• permanent order
3. Through legislated authority
• Family Relations Act
4. By other province consents
5. Under Adoption Act.
LEAVING CARE
1. Agreements—parents or superintendent terminate agreement or agreement expires.
2. Court orders—F&CS Act wards
temporary order expires
permanent—child reaches age 19 years, order rescinded, or child marries or is adopted and judge approves discharge from care.
3. FRA wards — child reaches 19 years or until a person applies for guardianship.
4. Other province wards — child reaches other province's age of majority, or child returns to other province, or order rescinded.
5. Adoption Act wards — child is legally adopted.

SECTION 2

The Foster Care Program

SECTION 2

The Foster Care Program

The goals and objectives of child-in-care services reflect the philosophy of the legislation as outlined in the Foreword. This section expands on that philosophy as it pertains to the Foster Home program and children-in-care.

There are children who must live apart from their families for periods of time. Most communities have families who can provide foster care to children, and who can assist the ministry in the process of returning the child home when appropriate. It is important that children who come into care and are placed in foster homes are kept in their own communities so that they can remain involved with their families and can be more readily reunited with them. Education may then be continued without interruption and community contacts can be preserved.

Objectives and Goals of the Foster Care Program

The objective of foster care is to provide good "substitute" parenting for children who cannot, for whatever reason, remain with their own families. The goal of the program is to return children to their own families as soon as possible. Where this is not feasible, the goal is then to make alternate permanent life plans for the children, such as placement with a relative, adoption or long term foster care.

The Team Approach

All planning and caring for the children involves the foster care team, comprised of a social worker, who supervises the children's placements; the foster family, who provides the day-to-day care; and the natural family, who is encouraged to remain involved. Foster care goals can be successfully met when there is a co-operative partnership amongst foster families, natural families and ministry staff.

Responsibilities of Foster Parents

The general responsibility of foster parents is to provide for the physical, emotional and social needs of children placed in their care. Some specific parenting responsibilities include:

— provision of well-balanced meals (Canada's Food Guide);
— ensuring provision of adequate and appropriate clothing;
— promotion of good health routines;
— maintenance of acceptable home safety standards;
— provision of guidance and supervision;
— provision of positive models of adult functioning;
— promotion of emotional well-being of children-in-care;
— recognition and respect for child's own cultural values or religion.

Points to Remember for Foster Parents

Each child placed in a foster home is unique and his ***individuality*** must be respected. Sometimes foster parents are advised that they should treat a foster child the same as they do their own, but caring for someone else's child is not the same as caring for one's own. Children-in-care have special needs. They have all experienced traumatic separation and loss. They are likely to have also experienced other difficulties before having to leave their homes. Most foster children, because of their past experiences, have a greater than average need for attention and affection and may require more understanding and patience than is usually required of parents.

Each child-in-care needs to ***understand and accept why he is in foster care.*** Foster parents should reinforce the explanations given by the social worker and which are geared to the child's level of understanding.

It is crucial that foster parents respect and protect each child's right to ***confidentiality.*** The information shared with foster parents by the social worker about the child and his circumstances must be held in confidence. The foster home agreement, which all foster parents sign, stresses confidentially. When in doubt about whether or not to share certain information with a school or social agency, the foster parents should discuss the matter with the child's social worker.

The ministry attempts, wherever possible, to place all children with their own extended families and families with similar life styles in order to reduce the separation trauma most children experience when moving to a new foster home. For ***children of Native origin*** for whom there is not a Native Indian foster family available, it's important to remember that different Native tribes have different traditions, values and life styles. The foster parent should ask the social worker for particular Band information or Band contacts that will provide information about the child's cultural values.

Foster parents must not lose sight of the ***importance of the natural family to a child.*** Regardless of the circumstances which bring a child into care, most want to return home. Foster parents must recognize the significance of the natural family, and demonstrate a positive attitude to the child about his family.

The rights and responsibilities of natural parents depend, in part, on how a child comes into care. Natural parents retain guardianship of children who are in care by agreement. Parents of Temporary Wards usually remain actively involved. If the goal is to return the child to his natural family, the social worker and the foster parent will need to work together to encourage the continued involvement of the natural family through visits and other contacts such as letters and telephone calls.

The matter of ***discipline*** should be approached with care by foster parents. The issue is a particularly sensitive one for children who come from a background of abuse. Appropriate disciplinary methods should be discussed with the social worker at the time of placement of any child. ***The ministry does not permit the use of physical punishment.***

It is important to show a ***personal interest*** in each child placed in a home. This can be communicated to the child by assisting with school work and encouraging participation in community events or programs. The child should be helped to have fun, develop interests and learn appropriate social behaviour.

Foster parents will be involved with the social worker in developing, carrying out and reviewing a ***life plan*** for each child. Once the goals and objectives of a life plan have been developed, they are reviewed on a regular basis because the child's needs will change as time goes on.

Foster parents should remain open and receptive to new ideas on child development, parenting and fostering. ***Parenting skills*** can be improved by participation in workshops sponsored by foster parent groups, the ministry and other community programs.

It is essential that children in care maintain ***positive relationships*** with their social worker. Foster parents have an obligation to enhance this relationship through what they say and do. They should ensure that the child keeps appointments with the social worker.

Regular contact and communication is also essential between foster parents and social workers. The social worker needs to be kept up-to-date about the child's progress and behaviour. Any proposed new activity or change in the child's circumstances, such as family vacations, summer camps and education are to be discussed with and agreed to by the social worker ahead of time and must be consistent with ministry policy (see Section 7).

Established health resources, and community agencies and public schools should be used in most instances for foster children. When children have particular special needs such as physical or mental handicaps, behaviour or emotional problems, the social worker should be consulted about other appropriate specialized resources.

When the plan is for a child to be moved from the foster home, the foster parents can

help the child most by maintaining a positive attitude toward the proposed change. The reassurance and support of foster parents will ensure a smoother and easier move for the child. Most moves are frightening and sad for children; they have to deal with anxieties around separation and attachment as well as a fear of what is coming next. Foster parents will find that they, too, can experience stress when a child is moved from their home. They should recognize these feelings in themselves and the child and feel comfortable about asking for assistance to help deal with the situation.

Responsibilities of Social Worker

The social worker is the delegate of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service who, under the *Family and Child Service Act*, has ultimate responsibility for custody or guardianship of all children-in-care. This responsibility is a paramount one and cannot be compromised by any other consideration.

The child's interest and well-being are the primary considerations, and it is vital that social workers and foster parents work together as a team to ensure that the child's interests are served.

The social worker is legally responsible for planning for children-in-care, but requires the help of the foster parents to participate in planning for the future of individual children.

The social worker is also obligated to maintain contact with the child in the foster home, to keep abreast of his progress and his problems. Again, the social worker works co-operatively with the foster parent and participates in frequent and frank exchanges of information to ensure that this obligation is met.

Social workers will explain basic policies to foster parents, share background information to assist foster parents in dealing with the specific child, and be available to answer queries. They will assist foster parents with problems concerning the children through consultation or referral to appropriate agencies or resources.

The social worker and the foster parent mutually decide who will deal with specific situations such as contacts with schools.

Social workers will discuss the rationale for foster home payments and what the home will receive.

General Responsibilities of Ministry Staff for the Foster Care Program

Regional Managers	Responsible for ensuring that requirements of policy legislation are implemented.
District Supervisors	Responsible to the regional managers for seeing that the intent of legislation, regulations and policy are carried out in practice.
Social Workers	Responsible for the recruitment, selection, approval and support to foster parents, and the assessment, planning, placement and review of children in the superintendent's care, as well as working with the natural families where the plan is to return the child.

SUPPORT SERVICES

No one expects foster parents to carry the responsibility of foster care totally alone. Outside resources and support services may be available when needed.

In most British Columbia communities the following support services are available:

Homemaker and Babysitting Services

These services can be provided when a foster parent needs to be absent from the home because of family illness, family crisis, training courses, attendance at a court hearing, medical appointment, or relief from caring for children with extraordinary needs. The district office can authorize payment for babysitting and temporary provision of homemaker services. Ongoing homemaker services require approval from the regional manager.

Day Care Services

Day care may be provided in a group facility, family home setting or for after school situations. When day care is needed to supplement foster care, approval is required by the district supervisor. Normally it is expected that preschool aged foster children will remain with the foster parent during the day except when a child attends a preschool program.

Respite (Relief) Care

Respite (relief) care for foster children may be provided when a foster family needs a break from caring for children with extraordinary special needs. Such care is usually provided in group homes, hostels, short-stay residences, bed subsidy homes, special care homes, Ministry of Human Resources or Ministry of Health institutions, hospitals, or other foster homes (holiday homes). Where there is no respite care available, provision may be made for a homemaker or babysitter in a foster parent's own home.

Child Care Counselling

Under the ministry's Special Services to Children program, child care counsellors work with individual children or groups of children who have exceptional physical, emotional or behavioural needs. The contracting of a child care counsellor is arranged by the social worker in consultation with the foster parent.

Infant Development Program

The Infant Department program (primarily an in-home service) may be used to assist foster parents in caring for children from birth to three years of age who are developmentally delayed or handicapped. Some Infant Development programs have parent support groups for parents and foster parents.

Emergency Services

Whenever there is an emergency involving the child, the foster parent is to call the local district office. When the social worker is not available, the foster parent should contact the intake worker or district supervisor so necessary action occurs. For all emergencies that occur after office hours, emergency services or the local RCMP detachment should be contacted. Foster families who live in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley or Victoria areas have access to ministry emergency services. Emergency situations that require a quick response include medical crises, accidents, deaths, runaways and arrests for juvenile offences.

Community Services

In addition to ministry support services, there are a variety of community resources which help families. For example:

— local foster parent associations (see Section 3);
— community or regional district recreation facilities and programs;
— mental health centres (family counselling, psychological assessments);
— public health facilities (speech, hearing assessments, child health consultation, family counselling);
— child development centres (preschool programs, infant stimulation programs and therapies—speech, physio and occupational);
— B.C. Council for the Family (counselling and family activities;
— Parents in Crisis (parenting groups);
— school district special services (counselling, psychological testing, tutoring);
— church (children and family programs—e.g. summer camps);
— family centres (parent-child drop-in centres, family places);
— Native Indian Friendship Centres.

SECTION 3

British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations

SECTION 3

British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations

Ever since the placement of the first foster child in British Columbia, social workers and foster parents have maintained a partnership of care. In the early 1960's this partnership was formalized with the development of foster parent councils in Kelowna, Vancouver and Victoria. The need for support services for children-in-care and foster parents united social workers and foster parents in a common cause. The result of this union was a provincial foster parent committee, organized in 1966, which blossomed into what is now known as the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA).

In 1970 in the city of Vancouver, at the third provincial foster parent conference, a provincial executive and constitution were voted upon and accepted by one hundred and thirty-nine foster parent delegates.

The BCFFPA is a registered non-profit society under the *British Columbia Society Act*. (See Organizational Chart at the end of this Section.)

The goals of the federation are:

1. a partnership with social workers to strengthen services for all children-in-care;
2. a partnership of communication and support for foster parents and social workers;
3. development of education and training programs for foster parents throughout B.C.;
4. a partnership with social workers and administrative staff toward resolving matters pertaining to foster care.

At present, there are over 70 local foster parent associations in B.C. All approved and active foster families are encouraged to become members and participate in the associations' many activities.

All of the associations promote the awareness of fostering in their communities through:

— social activities such as Christmas parties, summer picnics;
— assisting the ministry in recruitment, orientation and support to foster families;
— education and training (monthly meetings, discussion groups and workshops);
— communication with other foster parents via buddy systems and self-help groups; and
— action by working in partnership with ministry staff on special programs.

The B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations is an organization for foster parents, run by foster parents to serve and support each other in their work as caregivers. Foster parents provide a unique service to a community by sharing their lives, their homes and their families with children who require temporary love and care. The active links which the federation maintains with the Ministry of Human Resources strengthen the partnership which is so vitally necessary for an effective working relationship between foster parent and social worker. As an organization, BCFFPA is in touch not only with concerned foster parents throughout B.C., but with similar organizations in other parts of Canada. In this way, they are able to share concerns which they hold in common with all foster parents, and to learn from each other's accomplishments and aspirations.

Administrative Structure of the BCFFPA

The B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations' structure is organized to reflect that of

the Ministry of Human Resources. For every Ministry of Human Resources regional office, there is potential for the development of a BCFFPA regional council. For every Ministry of Human Resources district office, there is potential for the development of a local foster parent association.

Provincial Executive

The provincial executive is made up of:
— eight elected officers, who have been nominated by their local foster parents association, and voted into office at the annual provincial meeting by the foster parent membership in attendance;
— appointed officers; i.e. newsletter editor;
— one regional representative from each region, elected by their respective regional councils.

The provincial executive is the governing body, legally charged with the direct control and operation of the BCFFPA. It is the final authority on all matters affecting the organization.

The Provincial Social Worker Consultant is appointed by the Ministry of Human Resources, Family and Children's Services Division in Victoria to act as a liaison between the ministry and the provincial executive of the BCFFPA.

Federation Office

A provincial federation office is located in Vancouver. See the ***Quick Information*** page at the end of this guide for their phone number.

Local Associations

Local associations are made up of foster parent members in a community, and a social worker is appointed to act as a liaison between the association and the ministry. Each local association has elected officers, holds regular meetings and sends two representatives to the regional council meetings.

The work of local associations is vital to the success of the federation. The role which the federation has in strengthening the foster care program is dependent on input from individual foster parents in all parts of B.C. As local associations are developed, foster families and foster children throughout the province can have a strong representative voice.

A local association carries out an important self-help function for foster parents. Even if a foster parent lives in an isolated area of the province, it may be possible to have a small association to share and exchange fostering news and ideas.

Foster parents can be a great source of support too each other. They may want to talk to someone who has experienced fostering and knows what it's all about. Many areas now have active foster parent buddy programs. Funding is available to help local associations pay for support and training events. The B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations in Vancouver has a wealth of material and resource people to help small associations in a variety of ways including:
— going through growing pains common to all foster parent associations;
— organizing training sessions to meet learning needs;
— supplying teaching and training materials to interested foster parents and ministry staff.

If there is no active organization in your community or area, contact your social worker for information on how to develop a foster parent association or call the BCFFPA for further information.

Regional Council

The regional council is normally made up of two foster parent members from each local association in the region, and a social worker appointed by the Ministry of Human Resources regional office.

Most ministry regions have foster parent regional councils. These councils have representation from local associations and each council in turn has representation on the executive of BCFFPA.

Regional councils contract directly with the ministry for funding (grants). Regional grants can be used for:
— organization expenses of local associations;
— support events and activities;
— newsletters;
— training programs—e.g. fees for regional college courses;
— staff to further the federation's objectives.

Fund Raising

Associations at the local, regional and provincial levels may participate in a variety of fund raising activities from time to time to finance some of their support programs such as scholarships, bursaries, specific projects, picnics and Christmas parties.

Membership

A foster parent, J. Bruins, has clearly identified the need for foster parent participation in the BCFFPA. She states:

> "I believe, . . ., that the time is past due for foster parents to realize that when they make their home available for a foster child, they take on a responsibility that involves more than taking care of the child. They become part of a system that provides a unique service in the community, and one that is desperately needed. Our society is becoming more complex, and the children coming into care are more complicated children.
>
> "At meetings foster parents can receive information about valuable training courses, organized by local colleges and taught by qualified professionals. (Social) workers are often present at meetings to answer questions on policy and decision-making. They can help foster parents to see how they can work together as colleagues . . . to plan for the child.
>
> "Long time foster parents are needed to give support to new foster parents. They need to learn about new policies and child-caring techniques. Their voice is needed to speak collectively to improve overall child welfare standards. To really benefit a child, foster parents need to work as partners with (social) workers and natural parents."

Foster parents who are not members of local foster parent associations can contact their local ministry office of the BCFFPA office for information on how to join.

Education

Local foster parent associations and regional councils have provisions to assist foster parents to attend education and training courses. Foster parents living in areas that have no active foster parent association may contact the social worker to see if the ministry can assist in offering training.

Foster parents may wish to join with other interested groups or agencies to sponsor and organize workshops.

Support in Resolving Foster Care Concerns

One of the support functions of the federation is to act, when appropriate, as an advocate for foster parents in the province. Help in sorting out difficult situations is available whether or not a foster parent has membership in a foster parent association.

If there is a concern between a foster parent and the social worker, the foster parent is encouraged to attempt to resolve the problem at the local level with the social worker. The social worker is to arrange a meeting with the foster parents within five working days. If this is unsuccessful, he may then arrange to meet with the district supervisor. The district supervisor is to meet with the foster parents within five working days. In the unlikely event that the issue is still unresolved, the foster parent may request a meeting with the regional manager. The regional manager is to meet with the foster parents within five working days. If this approach does not result in a resolution satisfactory to the foster parent, the federation may become involved through the local assocation, regional council, or the federation's main office in Vancouver.

The role of the federation, in these issues, is one of a mediator. When requesting assistance from the federation, information is required in writing:

— details of the issue and efforts made to resolve it;
— the foster parent's authorization of the federation's involvement;
— name and birthdate of foster child, and length of stay in the foster home.

The federation office will contact the regional manager to request a meeting of all persons concerned to review the issue.

For further information, call the federation office at the phone number listed at the back of this guide.

BCFFPA

PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE
(8 elected)
PRESIDENT
FEDERATION OFFICE: 1st, 2nd, 3rd VICE-PRESIDENTS
TREASURER, SECRETARY
PUBLIC RELATIONS,
MEMBERSHIP
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
APPOINTED POSITIONS

STAFF POSITIONS:
EXECUTIVE-DIRECTOR
EDUCATION & TRAINING
COORDINATOR
SECRETARY
BOOKKEEPER

REGIONAL COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN TREASURER SECRETARY
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

LOCAL ASSOCIATION

FOSTER PARENT

MHR

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

DEPUTY MINISTER/SUPERINTENDENT OF FAMILY AND CHILD SERVICE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

REGIONAL/DIVISIONAL MANAGERS

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS/CO-ORDINATORS

SOCIAL WORKERS

CHILD

SECTION 4

Becoming a Foster Parent

SECTION 4

Becoming a Foster Parent

Most people who decide to become foster parents have thought about it for a long time before applying. When they make the decision to contact the ministry or attend an information night, they often see no reason why a child cannot immediately be placed with them. **Children cannot be placed in a foster home until the home has been approved by the Superintendent of Family and Child Service.** This is a legal requirement of the *Family and Child Service Act* as well as an ethical requirement of the ministry to the children and families they serve.

In this section of the guide, the approval process and the ongoing review procedures will be discussed.

Orientation

Orientation programs are aimed at helping potential and new foster parents to learn about the ministry, the foster care program and themselves.

Depending upon how a particular region is staffed, the ministry may require foster parents to attend an orientation session before or after an application is completed.

Selection and Approval Process

The process set out by ministry for the selection of foster parents is designed to provide and elicit information that will enable ministry staff and prospective foster parents to determine together their suitability for the foster care program.

The application form and the home study interview process provide indications of what a prospective foster family might have to offer a child. References and the medical assessment complete the picture.

The Application

The categories of information on the application forms are personal history, education and work history, experience in child care, family interests, health, criminal records, preference about the kind of child applied for, and named references.

Should the application indicate information that the applicant or other immediate family member was or is receiving psychiatric or psychological treatment, or if someone in the family has a criminal record, the social worker is obligated to request more detailed information. The social worker, in these circumstances, may ask the applicant to sign a consent form to be directed to the appropriate professional person or agency, allowing the release of confidential information. It is necessary for matters such as these to be explored fully in order to determine whether or not they may have a bearing on a family's ability to provide quality, protective foster care to children.

In addition to the questions on the application form, all applicants will be requested to have the police undertake a criminal record check. In the event there is a criminal record, a review of the offence will be conducted with the individual, if the individual consents.

References are required. These may be professional persons, friends or relatives who are in a position to know the applicants and how they may relate to foster children. The information provided by references is kept strictly confidential.

A medical assessment reference letter for signing by the family's physician is provided with the application form. It is important for the ministry to know of any health problem in the family which might affect the family's ability to provide foster care.

The Home Study provides the opportunity for the prospective foster parents, the family and the ministry:

— to explore the family's motivation for applying and wishing to foster;

— to clarify and discuss information gathered through the application;
— to discuss medical assessment and references;
— to discuss the program in more detail.

Since fostering is a family affair, all members of the family are included in the home study process. The home study is carried out in the applicants' home where atmosphere, relationship and attitudes can be observed and discussed.

It is the district supervisor's responsibility, following discussion with the social worker, to make the decision whether to approve an application to foster. The decision will be based on the social worker's assessment of the quality of care which the foster applicants may be able to provide.

The home study process lays the foundation for a co-operative, sharing, trusting and ongoing partnership between the foster parents and social worker.

The Foster Home Agreement is signed by the approved foster parents and the district supervisor prior to the placement of a child in a foster home or at the time of the first placement. The agreement outlines the ongoing responsibilities undertaken by both the foster parents and the ministry. A signed copy is provided to every foster home. The agreement is renewed every five years.

Annual Review of Foster Homes

Social workers have an obligation to carry out written annual reviews of foster homes. This review gives both the foster parent and social worker an opportunity to review jointly overall progress. The general progress of children is reviewed to ensure that children develop and grow as they should, that their needs are being met and life plans being achieved. The specific goals set for each child are also reviewed to ensure that they are realistic and, if so, are being accomplished. Foster parents will receive a copy of the annual review.

The question of whether foster parents have adequate supports to enable them to provide the best possible care is reviewed at this time also. In addition, this review presents an opportunity to consider whether there have been any significant changes in the foster family such as health, separation or other crises that could affect the child.

SECTION 5

Placement

SECTION 5
Placement

Responsibilities of Social Workers When Proposing and Placing Children

Social workers provide information about a proposed child, his needs, background circumstances and a service plan. However, when a child comes into care during a crisis and an emergency placement is required, full information may not be available immediately. Social workers are to arrange pre-placement visits whenever possible.

Social workers explain the natural family's involvement with the child, including details about parental visits and telephone calls. They discuss suitable backup service when required, the child's immediate care needs such as clothing, and they provide the child's medical card. An explanation about payment arrangements is made at the time of placement. If a foster home agreement has not previously been signed, this will be done at the time of placement.

Responsibilities of Foster Parents When Considering a Placement Proposal

Foster families should be realistic in deciding whether or not a child will fit into their family. For example, some families are able to foster teens well and some families do best with children with certain kinds of personalities. Foster parents should recognize their family's strengths and limitations. This is a time for them to be open about feelings and possible doubts concerning proposed children. The decision to accept a child into a foster family should involve all members of the foster family. Candid communication helps the social worker and the family make the best placement decision for the child.

Confidentiality, as stated in a previous section, is of utmost importance at all times.

Numbers of Children in Foster Homes

It is a joint responsibility of the ministry and foster parents to ensure that homes do not take on more than they can handle. It is a social worker's responsibility not to overload a home, and it is the foster parents responsibility to say 'no' when additional placements of children will be too demanding. Foster homes normally are not to care for more than six children, including their own.

Impact of Placement on the Child

Separation and attachment are two different phases children must go through in order to adjust and develop normally in a foster setting. Foster parents should remember that the child is leaving his known world behind. They should not expect an immediate commitment from the child.

Normally, at the time of placement, a child is afraid that his foster parents may be like some other adults he has experienced. He may feel sad at being separated from those he loves, or angry at those associated with his removal from his home. He may be inquisitive about his identity and the circumstances which led to placement in a foster home.

Some thoughts a child in these circumstances may have are:

"I am so bad my parents sent me away."
"I am being punished."
"Everything bad that happens to my family is my fault."
"I am so rotten, no one can love me."

Often an initial honeymoon period during which the child exhibits good or angelic behaviour leads the foster parent to believe that the child has no serious problems. On the other hand, foster parents may encounter a range of behaviour which may include bed wetting, soiling clothes, getting sick, eating difficulties, sleeping excessively or having nightmares, head banging, masturbating, fighting, talking incessantly. Some children may fit into the home without showing any outward sign of disruptive behaviour, but all children are affected by separation in some way.

What Foster Parents Can Do to Help the Child Overcome Separation

— Accept the behaviours and beliefs as natural and necessary responses to separation. Realize the behaviour is not aimed at them.
— Give the child permission to feel sad, angry, unhappy. Help the child find acceptable outlets for his feelings.
— Provide lots of physical closeness, warmth and affection when the child is ready.
— Accept that some children are not able to accept any demonstration of physical closeness.
— Keep new experiences and changes to a minimum during this initial adjustment.
— Maintain a positive attitude toward the child's family.
— Support visiting with the child's family when recommended.
— Use child's familiar toys, clothes, foods and routines to help him settle and adjust quickly.

Impact on the Foster Family

The impact of fostering on a family will depend to some extent on how the new foster child expresses his feelings and how the family responds to his behaviour. For example, a passive, compliant child may create few problems, yet an angry, hostile child may present some adjustment difficulties.

The relationship between the foster parents may undergo change. The foster father, for example, may feel excluded because much of the planning takes place while he is at work. Furthermore, he is likely to find that time previously spent with his wife and family has been disrupted.

The foster mother may, as well, experience stress because of the additional demands and may feel guilty because she has less time to give to her husband and children.

The foster family's children:
— may resent the foster child because he receives more attention;
— may not understand that the foster child has a greater need for attention and approval;
— need to be assured that their feelings of jealousy and displacement are normal;
— need some time to discuss that treating children differently is not unfair;
— should be involved in helping the newcomer in the home to adjust and settle.

By being aware of early adjustments and difficulties foster families can do a lot to lessen the impact on everyone.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

It is always important to discuss specific payment procedures at the time of placement. This will ensure that the child receives the benefits the foster care profgram has to offer.

Initial Clothing Grant

When a child first comes into the ministry's care, his clothing needs are assessed by the social worker in consultation with the foster parents and, if necessary, brought up to an adequate standard by means of an initial clothing grant. If a child is coming to a foster home from another child care resource, he likely will not need an initial clothing grant as he should already have sufficient clothing.

Start-Up Expenses

Start-up expenses may be required at the time of initial placement to cover food and household expenses. An advance up to $100.00 for food may be made and will be deducted from the first month's foster home payment. Other extraordinary expenses, such as a bed, may be authorized at the time of a child's placement. This expense is not deducted from the monthly foster home payment. However, the foster parent must remember that the purchased item belongs to the ministry.

Basic Maintenance and Clothing

Basic maintenance is expected to cover normal child care costs: food, clothing, transportation, recreation, personal care items and the child's share of the family's housing costs. The clothing portion of the monthly maintenance cheque is intended to replace clothing, as needed. Basic maintenance also includes the Federal Government ***special family allowance.*** This special allowance is

more than the regular family allowance because it includes the child's tax credit.

The maintenance cheque is issued from the ministry's Accounting Division (Vancouver or Victoria) by the 15th of each month. Therefore, if a foster parent has fostered a child for the month of August, the basic maintenance payment will arrive close to the middle of September.

Lost Cheques

When a maintenance cheque for a foster parent has been lost or stolen, the foster parent will be given a "letter of undertaking" to complete prior to a replacement cheque being issued.

Maintenance Extras

Sometimes a foster child needs special equipment or clothes not covered by basic maintenance. All maintenance extras are to be discussed with the foster parent, the social worker and, where appropriate, the child. Maintenance extras are approved by the district supervisor. The need for continued payment for maintenance extras is reviewed every six months by the social worker and district supervisor. Items which may be considered as a maintenance extra include:

- special needs clothing for handicapped children or for children who require additional clothing because of harsh weather conditions;
- special dietary or additional food requirements for a child with medically approved dietary needs that cost more than the usual diet;
- reasonably priced bicycle, sports equipment, membership fees, musical instrument when important to the child's development (older children should be encouraged to earn portions of these costs);
- unusual wear and damage to household furniture and the foster home;
- additional household items that are essential for a particular child;
- extraordinary laundry expenses;
- extra safety belts or seating restraints for motor vehicles;
- limited household support services—babysitting and homemakers.

The granting of extras should reflect what is normally available to all children in the foster home. It must also be remembered that the Maintenance Extra's budget is limited and not all requests are approved.

Extra Supervision Payments

When a child requires extraordinary care or supervision, compensation may be made in addition to the basic maintenance. The child's special care needs will be assessed by the social worker and foster parent by using a point rated schedule (***Form 1614A***) to determine a fair rate. Any proposed special rate requires the district supervisor's approval.

Extra supervision payments relate to the extra time required to meet the child's special needs, and as improvement occurs and the needs for extra supervision diminishes, extra payments may be reduced accordingly. Extra supervision rates are reviewed every six months by the district supervisor.

School Supplies Grant

A school supplies grant is added to the maintenance payment twice yearly, and is paid directly to the foster parents to cover locker fees and basic classroom supplies. School supply payments are included in the August and December maintenance cheques, issued to foster parents by mid-September and mid-January respectively. These payments are automatically produced for preschool children already in care who will become six years of age prior to December 31 of the current year. Payments for supplies for preschool aged children enrolled in special education programs may be authorized by the social worker. Should a child be placed in a foster home during the school year and require new school supplies, the foster parent may be reimbursed. When school related expenses exceed the school supplies grant, the foster parent is to submit receipts to the social worker in order to be reimbursed.

MEDICAL COVERAGE

Medical Services Plan

The district office at the time of the child's admission to care will apply for a permanent

Medical Services Plan (MSP) card. As soon as the district office receives the number and medical card from Victoria, the card will be given to the foster parents. (For further details see Section 7.)

Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment

At the time of a child's placement, foster parents will be given a card which authorizes them to consent to a child's emergency medical needs when the guardian is not available to consent.

Freight Costs

When a child's personal belongings need to be transported to or from the foster home, the foster parents are to discuss the necessary arrangements with the social worker. It is important for children to have their own familiar clothes and favourite belongings with them.

Life Books

Life Books are similar to scrapbooks—a place to record and keep mementos and photos of happy events, medical records, school reports. Foster parents can encourage a child to be proud of his own family, other substitute families, his friends and his stay with the foster family. Life Books are an important link to a child's past.

Life Books are available for all children who have been in care for more than six months. If the child does not have a Life Book, foster parents should request one from the district office. Foster parents are expected to help a child keep his Life Book up-to-date.

Foster Parents' Checklist for Placements

Foster parents often wish they had asked more questions at the time a child was first placed in their home. The checklist below is designed to assist foster parents to ensure that they have all of the necessary information to meet the specific needs of the child.

1. Why is this child being placed?
2. Will there be pre-placement visits?
3. What is the child's legal status? (Ask for an explanation.)
4. What is the plan for the child? Expected length of placement?
5. Where are the parents? Do they know where I live? Will they call?
6. Will the parents visit?
   a) How often?
   b) Where? (my home, theirs, or a setting like a district office?)
7. Are there brothers/sisters and where are they? Can they visit the child?
8. Are there other people with whom it is important for the child to remain in touch?
9. Name of the child's worker and phone number?
10. When will the social worker visit? How often?
11. When will I receive the form "Confidential Information for Foster Parents Regarding Child in Placement" (***HR 1612***)?
12. Is the child in good health?
13. When did the child last see a doctor?
14. Does the child have any medical or dental problems, allergies, medication?
15. What is the child's medical number? Will I get a medical care for the child?
16. What grade is the child in at school?
17. Are there any school problems?
18. Does the child have any special behaviour problems or unusual habits?
19. Will there be an initial clothing grant?
20. What is the maintenance rate?
21. If there is an emergency after office hours, whom can I call?
22. Will I be expected to drive the child to any appointments or regular programs?
23. What will make the child feel most at home (favourite foods, toys, etc.)?
24. Have I signed the Foster Home Agreement?

DON'T FORGET TO ASK . . . !!

SECTION 6

Planning

SECTION 6

Planning

To meet every child's need for roots and permanency, foster care needs to be a planned service. As soon as a child comes into care, the social worker sets a plan in motion by co-ordinating the assessment, planning and decision-making activities for a child and his family. A clear plan for foster children will eliminate some of their feelings of doubt, uncertainty and anxiety about what will happen to them when in care.

The service plan for every foster child must reflect one of the following ministry goals for all children in care:

— reunite the child with his family or relative, place the child for adoption, place the child in a long-term foster family setting, a specialized resource or assist an older child to prepare for independent living.

Planning involves working together and understanding each other's roles and responsibilities.

Plans for each child are reviewed regularly by social workers in order to assess whether goals have been attained, and to accommodate changes and different circumstances.

Review of Schedules for Planning

Assessment: Every month.

Return child to home: Within six months of stating plan.

Placement with relatives: Within six months of stating plan.

Adoption: Within three months of stating the plan.

Long-term foster care: Every six months.

Specialized care: Every six months.

Independent living: Within three months of stating the plan.

The chart on the following page clarifies each person's responsibilities for planning.

PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Child's Status While in Care	Ministry	Natural Family	Foster Family	Child (where age appropriate)	Other Agencies
Special Care Agreement (Voluntary — parents remain the guardians of the child.)	• defines with natural family and child the nature of the problem which requires resolving by using foster care. • assesses child and family's behaviours • defines goals for child and family • reviews goals and objectives • decides whether or not child remains in care or returns home		• asks what life plan is for child placed in home • assists in assessment of child's behaviour, keeps records, provides information and opinions • supports the plan and helps child to accept it • participates in reviews of life plans by providing information • handles information in a confidential manner	• participates in definition of problem and care/treatment to be received • participates in planning and placement activities, and in decisions regarding returning home or remaining in care	• assist the ministry and natural family in assessment and planning activities when requested
Temporary Wardship (Court order — superintendent is temporary guardian of child.)	• defines with natural family's participation degree of protection risk for child • assesses child and family's behaviours and parent's skills • defines goals for child and family • reviews goals/plans • decides if child goes home or requires alternate permanent care	• assists in assessment • participates in realistic goal setting • participates in all reviews • participates in decision to have child returned or remain in care	• asks what life plan is for child placed in home • assists in assessment of child's behaviour, keeps records, provides information and opinions • supports the plan and helps child to accept it • participates in reviews of life plans by providing information • handles information in a confidential manner	• participates in definition of problem and care/treatment to be received • participates in planning and placement activities, and in decisions regarding returning home or remaining in care	• assist the ministry and natural family in assessment and planning activities when requested
Permanent Wardship (Court order or *Family Relations Act* Ward — superintendent is permanent guardian of child.)	• assesses child's permanent care needs • decides where best to place child permanently — adoptive home, relative or foster home.	• assists, if appropriate, in seeking alternate permanent placement with relatives	• assists in preparing child for adoption, placement with relatives or another permanent placement • agrees to adopt child	• lets social worker know where he would like to belong	• assist in permanency planning when requested

SECTION 7

Parenting Policies and Procedures

SECTION 7

Parenting Policies and Procedures

Liaison with Natural Parents

The ministry encourages foster parents to maintain contact with the child's natural family. This is especially important when the natural parents are the legal guardians and the plan includes returning the child home.

Home Visits

One of the best ways for children to maintain contact with their family is through home visits. Home visits help:

— Children work through painful feelings around separation by enabling them to face their parents' circumstances and accept their need to be in care.
— Children develop stronger relationships with their foster family by making it clear that foster parents are not keeping them away from their natural family.
— Children to see their own family realistically. (Without contact, children may hang on to many unrealistic fantasies about their parents.)
— Foster families maintain an up-to-date picture of the natural family's situation through regular contact. (Keeps the natural parents involved so they may regain confidence.)
— Children deal with frightening separation fears. By seeing their parents they confirm that their natural family is still part of their lives.

Practical Tips for Positive Visits

Foster parents will want to:

— Be aware of the possibility of negative and mixed feelings on their part toward natural families and refrain from expressing these feelings to the child.
— Be open to the idea of a social worker being present if supervision is required.
— Establish with the social worker and the parents the specifics of visiting beforehand:
  (a) location and the length of visit;
  (b) handling of food and gifts. Recognize and accept that most parents have a need to give material things to their children;
  (c) if the visit is in the foster home, give the child and parents some privacy.

If possible, visits should be arranged at a time that will not conflict with normal foster family activities.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Discipline

The ministry does not permit the use of physical punishment for any child in the superintendent's care.

Children-in-care need secure, stable and loving environments. Because many foster children have been abused they tend to regard physical punishment as a sign of rejection. The use of physical force does little to help children learn acceptable behaviours and develop a sense of responsibility.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— discuss with the social worker appropriate methods of discipline within ministry guidelines.

Social Worker

— has a responsibility to explain this policy and its rationale as well as to discuss with the foster parent appropriate discipline methods for each child placed.
Social workers are to assist foster parents in learning alternate methods of discipline.

Foster Parent Associations

— organize workshops on effective discipline methods to change and modify children's behaviour.

Children

— the more children can be involved in the discussion and setting of rules, limits and consequences, the quicker they will learn about the foster families' routines and expectations. Children who are able to establish a relationship of trust and respect rather than being motivated by a fear of punishment are less likely to behave in an inappropriate fashion.

EDUCATION

Preschool Programs

Preschool-aged children (age three to five years) may attend preschool programs where they are available and considered necessary.

Some young children can benefit from attendance at preschool programs to help them catch up or learn acceptable behaviours.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— discuss with social worker child's attendance at a preschool program—is it necessary? how often? and where?
— enroll the child.

Social Worker

— assess the need for preschool attendance, discuss the plan with foster parents and natural parents, if appropriate, and arrange for payment of any fees, if required.
— issue school supply grant, if required, to the foster parent.

School Programs

Children-in-care are to attend schools in accordance with the British Columbia *School Act*.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— enroll child in school, allow child to use his own name.
— tell the teacher at school that the child is in foster care.
— sign report cards, be involved with parent-teacher meetings.
— held child adjust to new school and friends.
— watch out for possible learning difficulties, inform social worker of any concerns that may develop, so the social worker can develop an appropriate support plan.
— discuss learning and social problems with the teacher or counsellor. Develop a positive working relationship with the school.

Social Worker

— let foster parent know of child's past school record.
— be available for special school-parent meetings when required.
— ensure child is assessed where need indicates; e.g. learning disability.
— ensure child is in appropriate education program.

Correspondence

Correspondence education may be provided to children in exceptional circumstances subject to district supervisor and school district approval.

Correspondence is not normally encouraged because a student needs a lot of motivation and discipline for self-directed studies. Children usually fare better when in school programs with other children.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— inform the social worker if the need for correspondence courses is indicated.
— assist the child in his studies to ensure the at-home program is working and all assignments are completed.

Social Worker

— discuss all implications with foster parents, child and natural parents, if applicable, and prepare a report for district supervisor's consideration. The district supervisor approves all requests for correspondence education.
— monitor progress regularly.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are to be encouraged where appropriate. Most children-in-care benefit from the extra attention and opportunity to learn new skills and interests provided by additional activities.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— determine the child's special interests or talents.
— discuss with the social worker enrollment in extracurricular activities in the community.
— be careful not to enroll the child in too many activities that may deprive him of the need for normal relaxed family living. After school can be a special time for a child to get to know the foster family.

Social Worker

— discuss with the social worker enrollment in extracurricular activities in the community.

Tutoring

Tutoring services are available for up to three months for children-in-care when the child's school and district supervisor confirm the need. Reviews must occur at the end of three months. Under exceptional circumstances an extension may be granted, but the extension is not to exceed three months. Tutors must be qualified teachers.

Some children-in-care fall behind in school because of disruptions to family life and numerous school transfers. When a child's progress is delayed and the school is not able to assist the child through its programs, the superintendent has a responsibility to ensure that the child receives appropriate assistance.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— notice when a child is not doing well at school. Be aware of the child's behaviour, performance and attitude toward school subjects. If a foster parent is at all concerned, call the social worker and ask that a conference be set up with the child's teacher.
— if tutoring is approved, help the child arrange his schedule and complete necessary assignments.

Social Worker

— discuss the need for tutoring services with the foster parents, the child and the school.

District Supervisor

— approve the provision of tutoring services.

School

— recommend a qualified tutor to the social worker in consultation with the foster parents.

Private Schools

Children-in-care are to attend public schools, except in exceptional circumstances where it may be in the interests of the child to attend a private school.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— discuss attendance at a private school with the social worker. Explore together the possible benefits and drawbacks. Involve the child and natural family, if appropriate, in the decision.

Social Worker

— prepare request for attendance at a private school for the regional manager's consideration.

Post-Secondary Education or Vocational Training

The regional manager may approve a child's attendance at a post-secondary or vocational facility or program.

The superintendent has the same responsibilities as any guardian to ensure a child in his care receives equal opportunities to further vocational or academic pursuits.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— help and encourage adolescents in their care to plan and define their educational and vocational goals.

Social Worker

— assist foster parents and older children-in-care to be aware of vocational and educational programs that further independence
— prepare requests for regional manager's approval.
— seek financial assistance to help child. Limited bursaries and scholarships are available for this purpose from the ministry and BCFFPA.

Regional Manager

— approve attendance at post-secondary or vocational programs within regional budget provisions.

HEALTH

General Health Care

The superintendent is responsible for the health care of all children who are in his care and custody:

— all children are to receive a medical examination when they first come into care.
— all children under age six are to receive an annual physical examination.
— all children who are ill should be seen by a doctor.
— all children injured in accidents are to be seen by a docotor.
— all children are to be immunized in accordance with Public Health requirements. Foster parents are to check with public health units to ensure that immunizations are up to date.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— arrange for medical appointments; ask social worker if child has already been seen by a doctor known to child.
— follow prescribed medical treatment.
— alert social worker when child requires any medical treatment or surgery so appropriate consents can be sought as required by the *Family and Child Service Act*.

Social Worker

— share all relevant health and medical history information with the foster parent.
— tell the foster parents who can authorize medical treatment for the child.
— give foster parents necessary forms for medical examinations.

Medical Services Plan (MSP)

On a child's admission to care, the district office will apply for the medical coverage for the child unless the child is in care by special care agreement and remains on his parents' coverage. Foster parents are to be given the child's MSP card.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— when a child is placed, ask the social worker for his MSP number.

Social Worker

— apply for the MSP number and card and give it to the foster parents as soon as it is received.
— explain to foster parents what can be covered and purchased with the MSP card—e.g. prescriptions.

Hospitalization

The child's guardian (natural parent or superintendent) must consent to hospitalization of a child for medical or surgical treatment.

Usually hospitalization involves serious decisions which necessitate a guardian's involvement. A foster parent should not agree to or authorize any hospitalization without the guardian's consent. Only in times of extreme emergencies and when the social worker cannot be located may a foster parent consent to ***emergency*** medical treatment. (See policy item below.)

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— advise the social worker when hospitalization is necessary so appropriate consents can be obtained.

Social Worker

— seek necessary consents from natural parents if parents are guardians or if

superintendent has temporary guardianship only.
— may issue *comfort allowances* of up to $25.00 to foster parents for children whose hospital stay is more than 14 days.
— advise the foster parent that after 14 days in hospital the monthly maintenance payments will be discontinued.
— arrange reimbursement for any unusual expense, if appropriate.

Emergency Medical Consent Authority Cards (Form HR 1621)

All foster parents are to be given this card which allows them to consent to a child's emergency medical treatment if they are not able to reach the social worker or duty worker.

After hours and on weekends, it is not always possible to reach a social worker quickly in order to seek medical consents. Foster parents may have to act immediately to seek emergency medical treatment.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— if foster parents are unable to locate a social worker, then use the card. If any clinic or hospital refuses to accept the card, call the Zenith Help Line—Zenith 1234 to seek a ministry staff person who will authorize consent.
— notify the social worker of the need for emergency medical treatment as soon as possible.

Social Worker

— issue the card to all foster parents.
— notify child's parents, if appropriate, of necessary emergency treatment.

Nutrition and Special Diets

Children-in-care are to be fed well-balanced nutritional meals, using Canada Food Guides (available at Public Health Units). When a special diet is prescribed, a maintenance extra may be provided.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— provide nutritional meals and advise social worker of unexpected dietary needs.
— check with public health nurse and doctor when uncertain as to child's dietary needs.

Social Worker

— inform foster parent of known special dietary needs; e.g. allergies.
— assist foster parents with any unusual requests for diet supplements.

Accidents

All accidents involving children-in-care require immediate attention. As caretakers and guardians, foster parents and social workers have responsibilities to safeguard the safety and well-being of every child-in-care.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— ensure the child receives necessary medical attention.
— inform the social worker of any accident to ensure all necessary legal steps are taken. When in doubt, call the social worker. Often accidents appear minor, for example neck or back injuries, yet they may become complicated disabilities at a later date.

Social Worker

— ensure child was examined by a doctor.
— contact natural parents where appropriate.
— inform Public Trustee of any accident to permanent wards so he may act in the legal interests of the child.

Special Health Care Needs—Professional Services

When children-in-care have been determined by a doctor to have special health needs, the ministry has a responsibility to assist in meeting these special needs within budget limitations.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— be alert to any special needs the child might develop. Many times it is foster parents who first notice unusual health problems, such as loss of hearing. Act on observations and intuition by telling the social worker of any concern. Ask for an assessment for the child.

Social Worker

— respond to foster parent inquiries about special needs. Ensure that all concerns are followed up so children who have special needs receive necessary attention.

Supplies, Therapeutic Aids, Glasses

For items that are not covered by MSP, the ministry's Health Care Division normally can cover additional costs where a legitimate need exists and where the request can be met by the budget.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— advise social worker whenever there is a need for a special item or piece of equipment.

Social Worker

— verify that the prescribed aid or equipment is necessary and seek necessary approval.

Dental Care

All children-in-care are to have dental check-ups every six months. For children who require orthodontic treatment, budget limitations permit the treatment of urgent cases only.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— ask social worker when child was last seen by a dentist. Arrange for regular appointments.
— help child overcome any fears of dentists and learn good dental hygiene.
— inform social worker whenever a visit is being planned in order to get the necessary forms.
— never take a child to an orthodontist without ministry approval.

Social Worker

— ensure foster parents have necessary forms for dental appointments.
— make appropriate referrals to the ministry for orthodontic treatment.

Pregnancy

Birth control and planned parenting instruction must be provided by foster parents and social workers for male and female adolescents in care. In the event that a female adolescent becomes pregnant, immediate counselling must occur so that the best plans possible are made for all concerned.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— ensure the adolescent has sufficient birth control knowledge.
— advise the social worker when an adolescent is pregnant.

Social Worker

— plan with foster parents how best to educate adolescents to planned parenting.
— arrange medical appointments.
— arrange for counselling.
— involve the foster parent, natural parent, physician(s) and the adolescent in assessing the following options:
  1. keeping the infant;
  2. having the infant adopted; or
  3. having a therapeutic abortion where there are significant health risks to the mother.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Allowances

The monthly maintenance cheque paid to the foster parent includes a spending allowance for the child. The amount of the allowance is to be determined by the foster family.

Children in foster care often do not have many of their own belongings with them, nor do they always have the chance to have savings or opportunities to learn about money in preparation for independence. Spending allowances, no matter how small, are important to children.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— decide what is a fair amount to be given each month.

— discuss with child appropriate use of the allowance.

Estates and Trusts

The Public Trustee manages the financial affairs of permanent wards who have estates and trust accounts. The management of estates and trust accounts for permanent wards is handled by the Public Trustee's office in Vancouver. The Public Trustee is appointed under the *Public Trustee Act* to protect the estate and property rights of permanent wards.

Responsibilities:

Social Worker

— may make requests to the Public Trustee's office for release of trust funds for education or university costs. Will assist a child when he turns 19 to have funds released.
— after a child has turned 16, may request the release of the child's BCRIC share certificates if the child has any.

Child

— when a child turns 19 he is to write to the Public Trustee for the release of his trust funds.

Earnings

There is no ministry policy regarding earnings by older children-in-care. The circumstances are too varied for a specific policy. Instead, there are some general guidelines:

— foster children rarely receive financial support after age 19 as do many natural children who require sporadic or continual assistance from their families during young adulthood. Foster parents should encourage the child to save so that earnings may go towards future education or independent living costs.

For those older teens who work part or full time and are not in school, foster parents and social worker should discuss:

— will the child contribute towards room and board? If so, how much?
— what portion of the earnings should be saved?
— can the child be financially independent?
— will the maintenance cheque to the foster parent be reduced or terminated?
— should the child move to an independent living situation?

TRANSPORTATION

Safety Restraints

All children-in-care must wear seatbelts or be properly restrained in a carrier or seat. Infants weighing less than 20 pounds must use a child restraint seat. Toddlers weighing between 20 and 40 pounds may use lap belts or child restraint seats. Preschoolers weighing 40 pounds or more but who are under age six must wear lap belts. All children over six are to use lap belts. Exemptions may be made for medical reasons, taxi cabs and emergency vehicles. Discuss this policy further with the social worker to ensure adequate safety restraints are available.

Transportation

A child's share of regular family transportation is in the monthly maintenance cheque issued to foster parents. The payment option for extraordinary transportation, such as educational or medical trips out of town, should be discussed with the social worker.

Volunteers or Escorts

When foster parents cannot travel with the child, the social worker may arrange for a volunteer driver or escort. Actual expenses may be reimbursed.

Air Travel

Occasionally a child may require an air flight home or for an out-of-town appointment. Social workers prearrange air travel to ensure adherence to accounting procedures. Foster parents should discuss with the social worker arrangements for scheduled flights and ticket pick-ups.

HOLIDAYS, SUMMER CAMPS AND TRAVEL

Whenever plans are made for a foster child to travel out of his community, they must first be discussed with the social worker.

Holidays

A child may accompany foster parents on holiday. A child-in-care by agreement or a temporary ward requires permission of the child's parent or guardian. Any plan for a child to be out-of-province with or without the foster family for more than a month requires the approval of the regional manager. Foster parents should give the social worker sufficient notice for appropriate authority to be granted.

Normally the monthly maintenance cheque includes the child's share of a family vacation. If an unusually expensive trip is being planned, some financial assistance from the ministry may be available.

Holiday Medical Coverage

Additional medical coverage must be obtained locally by the foster parents or the social worker prior to the child making a journey outside of Canada. This coverage is reasonable and can be purchased at any insurance or travel agency. Foster parents will be reimbursed.

Letter of Authority to Travel

If a permanent or temporary ward will be travelling out of the province, the social worker will provide the foster parents or the child with a letter (*Form HR 1626*, To Whom It May Concern) signed by the district supervisor stating the child's legal name, status, and authority for the child to travel. Foster parents of children-in-care by agreement require the written authority of the natural parent or guardian. These letters of authority facilitate the crossing of international boundaries.

Passports and Visas

When arrangements are being made for a foster child to travel outside of Canada (with the exception of the United States) a passport or visa, or both, is required. When a passport is required for children-in-care for whom the superintendent is guardian, foster parents may obtain and complete the application on behalf of the child, and have the passport pictures taken.

When the application has been completed, the foster parent contacts the social worker who submits it to the nearest passport office, accompanied by a letter of approval from the superintendent, a copy of the child's birth certificate, the passport pictures and a money order.

When the superintendent is not the guardian, the parent or legal guardian must apply for the passport. The superintendent must approve all passport applications for travel outside Canada.

Summer Camp

Registration in a summer camp for a foster child must be authorized by the social worker. When the natural parents retain guardianship, they must be in agreement with the plan. Provisions can be made for camp fees and camping equipment for the child.

Wilderness and High Risk Activities

Foster parents must check with the social worker to make sure all wilderness, outdoor and high risk activities for foster children are safely conducted to reduce risks of personal injuries. Standards and guidelines for many outdoor activities; e.g. canoeing, mountain climbing, underwater diving, river rafting, etc., have been developed by the Ministries of Human Resources and Attorney General to ensure safety. Foster parents have an obligation to be aware of and to observe these standards.

DRIVING AND AUTOMOBILES

Driver's Licence

The district supervisor makes application for driver's licences for adolescents in care following discussion with, and agreement by, social worker and foster parents. The social worker obtains written approval from the natural parents of temporary wards prior to the district supervisor making application. For those adolescents in care by agreement, the natural parents must make application on their own. Adolescents in care between ages 17 and 19 may make application without the guardian's consent if they are self-supporting.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— contact the social worker if adolescent in care wants to apply for a licence.
— enroll adolescent in driver's training program if appropriate, and district supervisor approves.
— arrange for adolescent to take examination once initial instruction completed.

Social Worker

— discuss with the foster parents, the adolescent and guardian, if necessary, the implications of an adolescent applying for a driver's licence.
— ensure the adolescent has no medical disorder that will interfere with the operating of a car.
— ensure that the adolescent is mature and responsible enough to operate a motor vehicle.

Natural Parent

— must give written approval if the adolescent is a temporary ward.
— is responsible for all application procedures if adolescent is in care by agreement.

District Supervisor

— sign application on behalf of the superintendent.
— may authorize partial or full funding for adolescent to attend a licensed driver training program.
— accompany adolescent, who must also have two pieces of identification, to the Motor Vehicle Branch to process the application. This is a requirement of the Motor Vehicle Branch.

Automobile Insurance

It is the responsibility of the adolescent to purchase his own insurance with savings or earnings. If the foster adolescent is driving the foster parents' vehicle, maximum ICBC liability insurance coverage should be obtained.

Motor Vehicle Ownership

When an adolescent wishes to purchase a motor vehicle, his guardian's approval is required.

LEGAL MATTERS

Civil

Responsibility for obtaining legal representation for civil actions for children-in-care varies according to the status of the child. If the child is a permanent or temporary ward, this responsibility is assumed by the Public Trustee. If the child is in care by agreement, the responsibility remains with the natural parent or legal guardian.

Criminal

When a child-in-care has been charged with a criminal offence, foster parents are to contact the social worker immediately so legal representation may be obtained.

Fingerprinting

Fingerprints cannot be taken if someone is charged with a "summary conviction offence" but if a person, including a juvenile, is charged with a "indictable offence" under the criminal code, then fingerprints can be taken as admissible evidence. A child can only be fingerprinted if arrested on an indictable offence.

Liability for Damages Caused by a Foster Child

The superintendent does not accept liability for damages caused by a child-in-care. This is based on the principle in common law that a parent or guardian is not responsible for the actions of a minor unless proven to have acted in a negligent manner. When a foster child causes damage to a foster parent's property, contact the social worker immediately.

Insurance

Foster parents should safeguard themselves through careful selection of insurance. Package policies are available which cover a broad range of areas for homeowners

and tenants. The British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations has a group insurance rider for extended property damage. All foster parents with a signed foster home agreement are automatically covered. Call the federation or your social worker for further information.

Marriages

Minors in British Columbia must have their guardian's consent if they wish to marry. The district supervisor may consent to the marriage of permanent wards. It is the responsibility of the child's natural parents to consent to the marriage of temporary wards and children-in-care by agreement.

The social worker may authorize wedding gifts to a maximum amount of $35.00 for children-in-care who marry.

Temporary and permanent wards who marry may be discharged from care only if the court approves the termination of guardianship.

Birth Certificates

Requests for plasticized birth certificates should be directed to the social worker, who will obtain one on behalf of the child from Vital Statistics Division, Ministry of Health.

Death of a Child

In the event of the death of a child-in-care, foster parents must call the social worker immediately. The social worker makes appropriate arrangements, including notification of the child's natural family.

Funeral expenses are paid by the child's natural family or by the ministry. Cremation may occur when requested by the natural parents. The social worker is responsible for these decisions and arrangements.

Running Away (AWOL)

If a child is AWOL (absent without leave), foster parents inform the social worker or the duty worker who in turn will notify the police. For children-in-care by agreement, and for temporary wards, the natural parents must be notified by the social worker. Normally, foster home payments are discontinued if the child is gone for more than 14 days. If a foster parent incurs any child related expenses during the child's absence, they may be reimbursed.

RELIGION

Children's own religious affiliations must be respected. Children-in-care by temporary wardship or by agreement can participate in the foster family's religious activities if the natural parents agree. They may be baptized or confirmed only with the natural parents' consent. Most parents do not object to their children attending church with the foster family. The social worker will obtain the necessary approval from the natural family.

Children who are permanent wards of the superintendent may participate in religious services including baptism and confirmation, in accordance with the wishes of the foster parents with the social worker's approval. It is important that children participate in decisions regarding their religious education.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

The publication of photographs, preparation of audio-visual tapes and interviews with the media which disclose identifying information regarding the child are not permitted unless approved by the superintendent. If a foster family is being featured in the media for any kind of recognition night, recruitment publicity or family award, the social worker is to obtain appropriate approval beforehand.

UNMARRIED WARDS WITH INFANTS

When an unmarried ward with an infant lives with a foster family, an application for income assistance for the infant will be made by the infant's parent (unmarried ward). The income assistance cheque may be made payable to either the infant's mother or to the foster parent, whichever is more appropriate. The infant may be placed in the care of the superintendent, in which case special payment procedures will apply. This situation requires discussion with a social worker.

GUN CONTROL AND SAFETY

Security

All firearms and ammunition in a foster home are to be locked and stored in such a manner that they are separated from each other. The Criminal Code of Canada requires all firearms to be securely stored.

Firearm Licence

No person under age 19 can be issued a firearm licence in British Columbia (section 12, *Wildlife Act*).

Hunting

Only children-in-care ***over 14*** are permitted to hunt. A child-in-care over 14 may hunt only if he has successfully completed a hunter safety training course, holds a valid hunting licence and is accompanied and supervised by an adult. The accompanying adult must hold a valid hunting licence, attend hunting and safety courses and ***closely*** supervise the child (sections 12 and 18, *Wildlife Act*).

Children-in-care by agreement and temporary wards must have written permission of their guardians to hunt, and permanent wards require a social worker's approval.

Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors are to be placed in each sleeping corridor or area in a foster parent's home.

SECTION 8

Leaving Placement

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Leaving Placement

REASONS FOR LEAVING

Decisions to move a child may be initiated by the child, the child's family, the foster family, the ministry or Family Court for any of the following reasons:

Achievement of Child's Goals

These moves are usually planned well in advance. Preparation and dates for the move are worked out with all those involved — foster parents, natural parent(s), adoptive parents, the child and ministry staff.

Change in Foster Family Circumstances

When circumstances affect the quality of foster care, for example, a death, serious illness, divorce, separation or family transfer out of the child's own community, it may be necessary to move the child. Plans for removal of children in these circumstances are to be worked out jointly with the foster parents, the child and ministry staff.

Request by Foster Family

If a placement is causing difficulty for the child or the foster family and all support efforts have been exhausted, the foster parents may request the removal of a child. Foster parents are obligated to give the ministry a minimum of four weeks' notice (see the foster parent agreement). The ministry requires advance notice for two obvious and important reasons:

— to provide time to find another appropriate placement (to reduce further disruption risks) for the child;
— to provide time to permit pre-placement visits to occur in order to assist in the child's separation and adjustment.

Request by the Ministry

The child's social worker or other ministry staff, e.g., district supervisor, regional manager or superintendent may request the removal of a child. Situations in which this may occur range from wishing to place brothers and sisters together to concerns regarding the particular foster family. Where there are any identified protection risks for the child, the child may be removed with little advance notice. The superintendent is required under the provisions of the *Family and Child Service Act* to respond to all protection concerns.

Request by the Child

Occasionally a child either removes himself from a foster home by running away and refusing to go back, or by requesting to go home, or to be placed in another child care resource. The social worker is to discuss the child's request with the foster family and the child. The outcome of each situation will depend upon the circumstances.

Removal by Court Order

The Family Court may order a child to be returned home. This may occur where children have been apprehended and temporarily placed pending a court decision. It may also occur when a child's temporary wardship has expired or a permanent order has been rescinded.

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSES

There are some common responses foster parents may have when a child leaves their home.

Initially, foster parents may be relieved when the child goes. At the same time they may have sad feelings; it is normal to have mixed feelings at these times.

If a foster parent is caring for other children and has a busy family lifestyle, there may be no time set aside to deal adequately with separation. Filling the space with "busy

activities" isn't always the best answer. Families may need time to readjust to a loss. Sometimes new children shouldn't be placed immediately into a foster home just because there is a vacancy. Only after the initial loss has been accepted should foster parents make decisions about whether or not to continue fostering.

Sometimes foster parents regret allowing themselves to get emotionally involved.

Foster parents should not blame themselves for natural caring feelings they have toward children. People do become attached to children they care for. However, foster care is also learning how to let go.

EASING THE TRANSITION FOR THE CHILD

Both social workers and foster parents can help ease the transition when a child is leaving a foster home placement.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— support placement decisions to remove a child.
— help child prepare for next move.
— reinforce social worker's explanation.

Social Worker

— make placement decisions including decisions to move children.
— include foster parents in the decision making process.
— share and discuss reasons for moving with the child.

Temporary Absences

Temporary absences, such as hospital stays, attending summer camps or home visits, are discussed in Section 7. It is worth mentioning here only in order to remind foster parents that children-in-care need reassurance that the foster family will be there when he returns. Children-in-care who are away on temporary visits or stays may be anxious about separation because of their past experiences.

Returning Home

The ministry's goal is to encourage natural parents to resume parenting responsibilites as soon as possible. Foster care is a temporary support program that assists the ministry in meeting this goal.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— support plan for child's return home.
— advise social worker if there are any problems regarding the plan.
— help child overcome any anxiety about going home.
— ensure child's clothing, personal belongings and Life Book accompany him.
— update social worker about child's school progress and health.

Social Worker

— arrange for child's medical examination.
— cancel the child's MSP coverage.
— give the parent the child's health care records.
— ensure all child's clothing, personal belongings and Life Book go with child.

Adoption Placements

When children cannot be returned home or placed with relatives, then the possibility of adoption should be explained.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— support plans for adoption.
— co-operate with all pre-adoption placement visits.
— prepare child for separation.
— prepare child for the practical move by gathering together clothing, personal belongs and Life Book.

Social Worker

— assess each child-in-care's suitability for adoption if a return home is not possible.
— explore the possibility of adoption by the foster parents for those children who have bonded to a foster family.

Reaching Age 19 (Age of Majority)

As soon as a child-in-care reaches 19 years of age, he is discharged from the superintendent's care and custody.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— provide emotional support to child at time of discharge.
— encourage child to drop by for visits and to keep in touch when child leaves the home.

Social Worker

— plan and prepare a child for independence well in advance of the discharge date, the child's 19th birthday.
— explore option of child remaining with foster family after age 19 if appropriate.
— have child notify Public Trustee in writing of his discharge so any funds in trust or BCRIC shares can be allotted to child upon his 19th birthday.

Going to Another Placement

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— acknowledge when a placement is not working.
— contact worker to see if anything can be done to save the placement (many times this is possible).
— help child and social worker prepare for required moves by being co-operative and supportive to the plan.
— ask what the foster home involvement may be with next resource, if appropriate, e.g. visiting child when he is in a containment centre, group home or another foster home.
— discuss any move with the child. Help the child understand that he is not "bad," nor is he always responsible for having to move.
— help the child complete his Life Book so it may accompany him on future moves.

Social Worker

— make placement decisions in co-operation with the foster family in order to ensure the best possible care for a child.
— prepare the child for any future move.

Independent Living

Not all 17 and 18 year old wards need to be with a family, especially if they are already reasonably independent and mature enough to be living on their own. Independent living provides an opportunity, with supervision, for a child to acquire important life skills in preparation for young adulthood.

Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— prepare child for leaving home.
— may assist in supervision and support of child.

Social Worker

— negotiate an agreement with child to cover items such as school attendance, job performance, behavioural goals, budget, place to live and frequency of payments.

District Supervisor

— approve all independent living agreements.

Child

— enter into an agreement and co-operate with social worker.

Enlistment in Armed Forces

Seventeen and eighteen year old adolescents in care may enlist in the Armed Forces with their guardian's consent. Natural parents' consent is required for adolescents in care by agreement and for temporary wards while the district supervisor's consent is required for permanent wards.

NOTE: Children-in-care by agreement are discharged from care when they enlist in the services.

Responsibilities:

Child and/or Foster Parent

— make appropriate inquiries to nearest recruitment office to find out about eligibility requirements.

Foster Parent

— advise social worker of any plans for child to enlist so appropriate approval may be obtained from the district supervisor or natural parent.
— prepare child for enlistment and leaving.
— keep in touch with child, if appropriate.

Social Worker

— discuss the child's plan to enlist with the district supervisor and child's natural parents, if appropriate.
— prepare child for leaving his placement and assist in enlistment where required.

Foster Home Closure

Whenever there are well-based concerns or where a foster parent no longer wishes to foster, the home is to be closed. The reasons for closure, regardless of how initiated, are to be shared by each party.

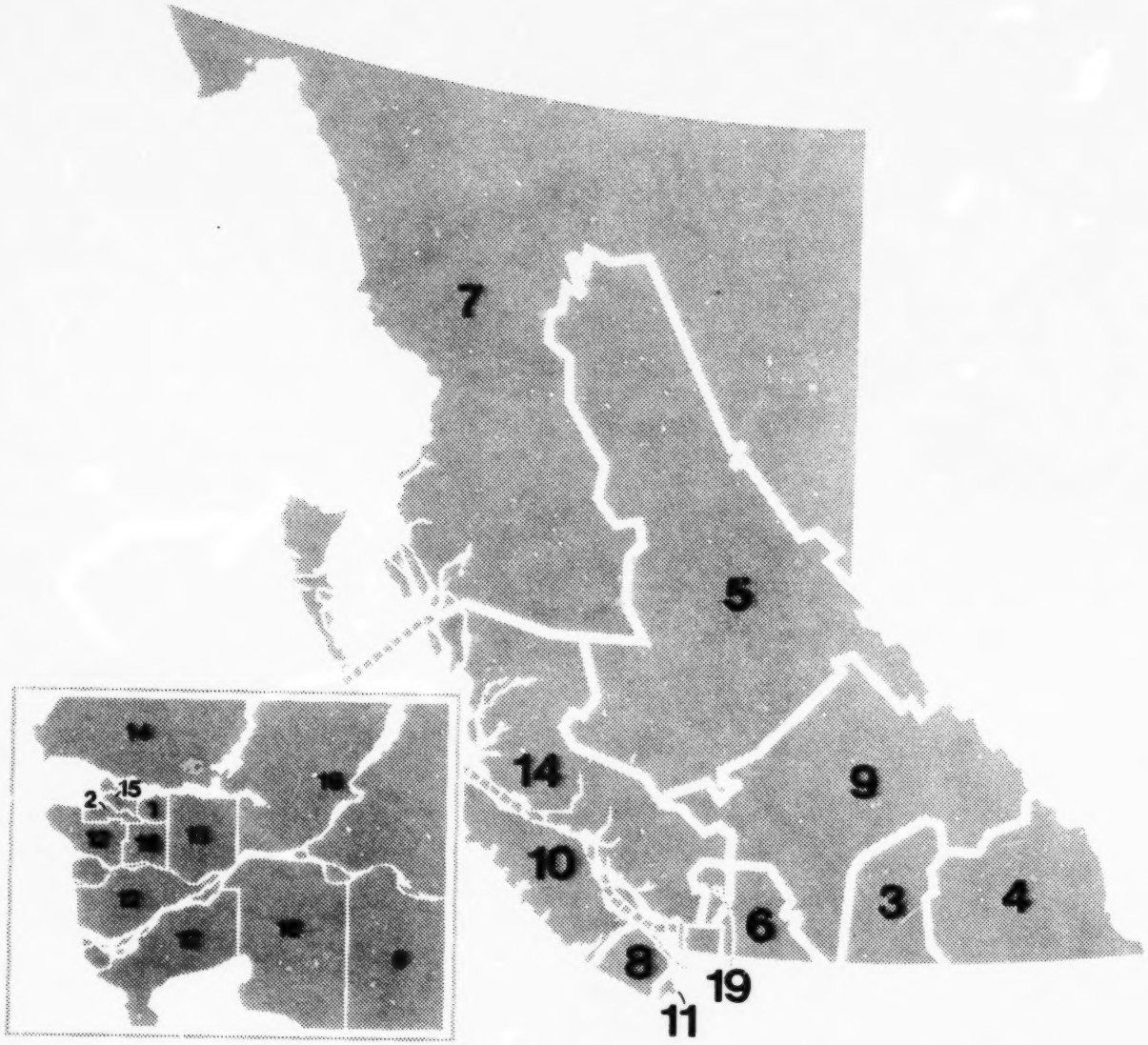
Responsibilities:

Foster Parent

— give ministry a minimum four weeks notice if the home is to be closed.
— be candid in the explanation to ministry staff about the reasons why they no longer wish to foster.
— assist child in preparing for the next move no matter who initiated the closure.
— use the procedure for resolving conflicts described in Section 3, if unhappy with the ministry's decision for closing home.

Social Worker

— when the closure of a home is being considered, the social worker must discuss the concern with the foster family in person.
— once the home is closed, a written termination notice, as per the foster home agreement, must be given to the foster family.
— within one month of closure, the foster family is to receive a written letter stating the reasons why the home was closed.
— refer family to appropriate support services when need indicates.



Ministry of Human Resources Regional Map

Region 1: Vancouver East
Region 2: Vancouver Burrard
Region 3: Okanagan
Region 4: Kootenays
Region 5: Prince George-Cariboo
Region 6: Fraser Valley
Region 7: Prince Rupert-Peace River
Region 8: Victoria West
Region 9: Kamloops Mainline
Region 10: Vancouver Island North of Duncan
Region 11: Victoria East
Region 12: Fraser South
Region 13: Fraser North
Region 14: North Shore-Sunshine Coast
Region 15: Downtown Strathcona
Region 16: Vancouver South
Region 18: Surrey
Region 19: Coquitlam-Maple Ridge

June 1985

Glossary

Definitions and Abbreviations Commonly Used in Children-in-Care Programs

AG — Ministry of Attorney General.

apprehend — to bring a child into the protective care of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service under the provisions of the *Family and Child Service Act*.

AWOL — absent without official leave, running away.

BCFFPA — British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations.

bed subsidy home — home that provides emergency crisis care for one to six children through a contract arrangement with the ministry.

child — a person under 19 years of age in British Columbia.

child care resource — a home, group home or facility approved by the Superintendent of Family and Child Service for placement of children-in-care.

CIC — child-in-care.

closure — the closing of foster homes, initiated either by the ministry or by a foster family.

committal order — an order made by family court committing a child to the temporary or permanent care of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service.

custody — the legal responsibility to oversee day-to-day care of the person of a child.

delegation — the act of assigning superintendent's duties and powers to other ministry staff.

discharge — discharge of a child from the care and/or custody of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service.

DS — district supervisor.

FAW — financial assistance worker.

foster home — a private home that has been studied by a social worker and approved by a district supervisor for placement of a child in care. A relative's home may be approved as a foster home.

FRA — *Family Relations Act*.

FRA Ward — a child with no guardian becomes a ward of the superintendent under the *Family Relations Act*.

F&CS Act — *Family and Child Service Act*.

group home — a licensed home or facility that provides residential care for three to eight children under a contractual arrangement with the Ministry of Human Resources.

guardian — a person lawfully invested with the power and charged with the duty of caring for and managing a minor child until the age of majority (in British Columbia, 19 years of age).

independent living — a ministry program for 17 and 18 year old children-in-care who are able to live in a situation with minimum supervision.

Life Book — a book given to each child-in-care, which is used to record important events and memories.

life plan — a service plan which outlines goals and objectives for children-in-care.

MHR — Ministry of Human Resources.

MSP — Medical Services Plan.

monitoring — reviewing a child's life plan to see if progress is on track and if service goals remain realistic.

orientation — a Ministry of Human Resources program to acquaint prospective and new foster parents with the ministry and its foster care services.

other province ward — a ward living in British Columbia who is from another province. The child's parent or other province retains guardianship.

permanent ward — a child committed by family court to the permanent guardianship of the superintendent.

placement — the act of placing a child in an approved child care resource or foster home.

planned life placement — a permanent foster home approved by a regional manager for a child who cannot return home or be adopted.

Public Trustee — a person appointed under the *Public Trustee Act* to, among other things, manage the financial affairs of minors who are permanent wards of the superintendent.

recognition certificate — a certificate presented to foster parents by the ministry for outstanding voluntary services.

recognition night — a special organized night sponsored by the ministry and foster parent associations to honour foster parents.

rescind — to annul, revoke or cancel.

respite care — relief services to families and foster families who care for children with special needs.

restricted foster home — a home restricted to the placement of a specific child or children. Usually the child and foster family know each other prior to placement.

RM — regional manager.

short-term custody agreement — an agreement between natural parents and the ministry to provide care for a child for a short period of time.

special care custody agreement — an agreement between parents and the ministry to provide special care to children who have treatment needs.

special care homes — homes which provide specialized care for one to two severely handicapped or behaviourally disturbed children on a contractual basis with the ministry.

special needs — developmental, health or educational needs that require the provision of additional services.

Superintendent of Family and Child Service — a person designated by the Minister of Human Resources to be responsible for the administration of the *Family and Child Service Act* and to be the superintendent of child welfare.

supervision order — an order made by the family court for the superintendent to supervise a child up to a period of six months in the child's own home.

SW — social worker.

temporary ward — a child committed by family court to the temporary guardianship of the superintendent. Temporary orders are for an initial period of up to twelve months and can only be extended once for an additional six months.

tracking — a schedule review of the goals and objectives of a service plan for a child-in-care.

ward — minor brought into care by an order of family or juvenile court.

Young Offenders Act (YOA) — Effective April 1984, the YOA replaced the Juvenile Delinquent Act. This act outlines how young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years will be dealt with by the police and court system.

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Quick Information

This is your guide. When a child is placed with you, use this page to enter important information for quick reference.

1. Child's Social Worker(s) Name: _____

   _____

   Telephone Number(s): _____

   _____

   Where to Call After Hours: _____

   (Evenings & Weekends) _____

2. **Other Ministry Staff Involved:**

   Social Worker(s): _____

   _____

   Telephone Number(s): _____

   Resource Worker: _____

   Telephone Number: _____

3. **Local Foster Parent Association Contact or Buddy Foster Parent**:

   Name: _____

   Telephone Number: _____

4. **Other Agencies Involved**:

   Name: _____

   Telephone Number: _____

5. **Child's Medical Number:**

   _____

   _____

6. **Family**:

   Names: _____

   _____

   Telephone Number(s): _____

7. **Emergency Service Numbers**:

   Lower Mainland: _____

   Victoria: _____

   Others: _____

8. **Children's Helpline:** Dial operator, and ask for Zenith 1234.

9. **B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations**:

   Telephone Number: 660-7696 (Vancouver).